

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

15. (currently amended) A method of processing an electronic check, comprising:
- receiving an electronic check encrypted using a one-time pad at a business;
 - transmitting an encrypted first copy of said electronic check to a payor's bank and an encrypted second copy of said electronic check to a payee's bank;
 - decoding said encrypted first copy of said electronic check at said payor's bank using a copy of said one-time pad;
 - authenticating said electronic check;
 - transmitting said encrypted first copy of said electronic check over an unsecure communication link to a clearinghouse with a payment authorization;
 - transmitting said encrypted second copy of said electronic check over an unsecure communication link to said clearinghouse;
 - comparing, at said clearinghouse, said encrypted first copy of said electronic check that has been transmitted over an unsecure communication link to said encrypted second copy of said electronic check that has been transmitted over an unsecure communication link; and
 - responsive to determining that said encrypted first copy of said electronic check matches said encrypted second copy of said electronic check and that the payment authorization has been received, processing, at said clearinghouse, a transaction transferring funds from said payor's bank to said payee's bank.